



For the Lifespan: The Caregiver Guide

Module 8

Working Effectively With In-Home Service Providers



Objectives



After completing this module, participants will be able to:

- Understand the benefits, potential problems, and options related to in-home providers.
- Learn how to interview and select personal assistants.
- Identify the steps needed to teach new tasks.
- Understand how to resolve conflict.
- Recognize how to fire, if necessary, and avoid theft.
- Learn about available funding.

Support for You and the Person You Care For

- In-home service providers or personal assistants may be one of the most important support systems for caregivers and the person they care for.





Advantages

In-home providers or personal assistants (PAs) can:

- Give you a much needed break.
- Lighten your duties.
- Take over difficult, stressful, or time-consuming tasks.
- Give you a chance to do other things.
- Prevent or postpone the person you care for from going to a nursing home or other facility.
- Possibly help your care recipient feel like less of a burden on you.



Disadvantages

Potential problems to think about:

- Lessens your privacy.
- Safety and security can also be concerns.
- May feel like you're not fulfilling your duty.
- Resistance of the person you care for.





Options for Getting Help

- Home Health Agency.
- Recruit volunteers (family members, friends, church members, neighbors, volunteer organizations).
- Hire someone privately.
- Exchange services for room and board.



Positive Aspects of Being a Service Provider/Personal Assistant

- Experience working with people.
- Opportunity for personal growth.
- Steady income.
- Generally flexible hours and often time for study.
- Usually available jobs.



Service Provider Qualifications

- Good communication and listening skills.
- A pleasant and positive attitude.
- Respect for your privacy and confidentiality.
- Be able to work closely with others.
- Has reliable transportation.
- An appropriate reason for applying for the job.
- Good personal and employment references.



A Service Provider Should:

- Relate well with people.
- Accept responsibility.
- Want to learn the job.
- Look beyond the disability to see the person.
- Maintain clean personal habits.



Advertising/Recruiting

The more you tell and advertise, the more likely you are to find good applicants.

List job opening at:

- Schools and Colleges
- Local Workforce Services
- LDS Employment Offices
- Websites such as caregiveralliance.com, caring.org, rewardingwork.org, monster.com, ajb.dni.us, careerbuilder.com, us.jobs, tweetmyjobs.com, etc.
- Social Media Sites (Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.).



Advertising/Recruiting (cont.)

Post flyers at:

- Centers for Independent Living
- Senior Citizen Centers, Aging and Retirement Organizations
- Hospitals, Nursing Homes, Rehab Centers, and Health Departments
- Library display areas, Community centers
- Apartment buildings, Grocery stores



Actual Ads – What Not to Say:

- FREE YORKSHIRE TERRIER. 8 years old.
Hateful little dog. Bites.
- FOUND DIRTY WHITE DOG. Looks like a rat ...
Been out awhile. Better be a reward.
- WEDDING DRESS FOR SALE. WORN ONCE
BY MISTAKE. Call Stephanie.
- FOR SALE BY OWNER: Complete 45 volume
set of Encyclopedia Britannica - Excellent
condition. Just got married last month. Wife
knows everything.

Screening Applicants



- Screen applicants over the phone first.
- Explain the job, the area where you live, and the salary.
- Ask if they have any experience with this type of work, and ask the applicant to describe.
- Ask the person why they want to apply.
- Arrange for an in-person interview, only if you like what you hear and don't have doubts.

Trying to set up appointments...

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
<http://www.cartoonbank.com>



"No, Thursday's out. How about never—is never good for you?"

Interview in Public or With Another Person

- It's safer to interview in a public location to protect your privacy and avoid theft.
- If you want to interview in your home, have someone else present.
- Let them know that you are careful about security.



Common Interview Questions

- Would you tell me something about yourself?
- What jobs have you had? How long did you work? What did and didn't you like?
- Why did you leave your last job?
- Why do you want to work as a personal assistant?
- Have you been responsible for assisting another person before?
- Describe how you are dependable and reliable.
- How long do you plan to work in this position?





The Interview

- Ask lots of questions and watch the person's response.
- Watch for nonverbal and personal traits.
- Listen to what is said, how it is said, and what is NOT said.
- Sometimes silence is a good interview technique to get the person to talk and gather information.

Disclosing and Deciding

- The applicant needs to know about all of the work (It's better to be clear in the beginning than have someone quit later).
- Explain the job duties and the salary.
- Interview more than one applicant.
- Give yourself at least overnight before you make a decision.
- Call at least two business and two personal references.



Possible Questions to Ask References

- How long have you known the applicant?
- How would you describe the applicant?
- Is the person honest, mature, and dependable? Why or why not?
- Do you have any reservations about this person doing this type of work?
- Employers – Why did this person leave? Would you rehire the person?
- Do you have any additional comments?



You Should Hire Someone With:

- Good references and at least some experience.
- A positive and pleasant attitude.
- Good communication and listening skills.
- An appropriate reason for applying for the job.
- A clean and trustworthy appearance.
- Respect for your privacy and confidentiality.



Medical Information

- Basic information about disability.
- Medication and possible side effects.
- Diet restrictions.
- Equipment and home arrangements.
- What to do in case of medical situations.
- Name and contact information for doctor.
- Ensure all of the above is in written form.



Checklists and Forms

These websites have helpful forms:

- Slco.org/aging/pdf/CSCaregiversGuide.pdf
- Caregiverforms.net
- Caregiverslibrary.org
- Homecare.com
- Caregivers.utah.gov



Basic Teaching Steps



- Introduce the task.
- Provide written instructions.
- Explain the steps of the task in detail.
- Demonstrate the task (you or another PA).
- Repeat the demonstration as often as needed.
- Imitate, have the new PA try the steps of the task.
- Refine and correct all steps.
- Give feedback, praise, or gently correct any mistakes.

Teaching a cat...

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED
<http://www.cartoonbank.com>



"Never, ever, think outside the box."

Train Experienced People

- Don't assume a PA knows how to perform a task until you've seen it done.
- Supplies and equipment you've used for years may be new to someone else.
- You may like things done differently than people in prior jobs.
- When you teach, show how to do the task the same every time.





Reviewing Work

- The more often the work is checked, the sooner a small problem can be fixed. Correct mistakes fast.
- Review:
 - Daily tasks/checklists every two weeks (initially check more frequently).
 - Weekly tasks/checklists every month.
 - Monthly tasks/checklists every three months.
- If there is a problem, see if all the steps are included.
- Show PA which step is missing, ask to demonstrate.



Tips for Good Relations

- Be patient with mistakes and questions. Something clear to you may not be clear to them.
- Once a task has been learned, do not keep telling the provider how to do it.
- Show appreciation for what they do well, praise often.
- Be kind and respectful but firm in letting providers know that your care recipient's life IS his or her life and they are “assisting with” and not “directing” it.

Communication Skills

- Clearly explain any issues.
- Use “I” statements which focus on your feelings rather than “You” statements which focus on the other person.
- Highlight your reaction and feelings rather than their actions.
- Listen to what your PA says.



Resolving Disagreements

- Face each issue as it appears.
- Be relaxed and clear when you talk.
- Listen to your PA.
- Work together to solve the problem.
- Focus on finding solutions rather than placing blame.
- Always attempt to create a win-win solution.



Practice Exercise

1. Your PA has been doing fine except Monday he called to say he would be late. Tuesday he comes in 20 minutes late, but does not call.
2. After three days of work, your PA begins moving utensils, dishes, and appliances to different locations, and rearranges items in the closet.
3. Your PA is less enthusiastic. She is a hard worker and you don't want to lose her. She says you don't appreciate her, and that nothing suits you.
4. Your employee comes in to work and you suspect he has been drinking. He smells of alcohol and is unsteady.

Preferred Ways to End Employment

- Fire in private, with someone close, unless there are safety concerns.
- Provide clear, valid reasons.
- Use good eye contact and a firm voice.
- Practice what you plan to say.
- Ask for your keys and any other items that belong to you.
- Conduct the firing at the end of the shift, if possible.



Common-Sense Steps to Cut Down on Dishonesty

- Gently tell them you track mileage, calls, etc.
- Lock up or put your money, jewelry, and medications away.
- Control your checks and cash.
- Ask for receipts.
- Don't give out your credit card or the number.
- Avoid letting a provider use your auto, phone, or home for personal use.



Be Careful, but Don't Stress

- Don't let these last sections dampen your spirit.
- Setting rules and carefully watching behavior will help discourage dishonesty.
- It's better to be aware and take precautions.
- Be careful and do what you can to be safe, but don't worry needlessly.



Potential Funding Sources

- Medicaid 800-662-9651
- Medicare 800-633-4227
- Insurance (private, retiree, employee, long-term care)
- Veterans 801-584-1294
- Division of Services for People with Disabilities 800-837-6811
- Area Agency on Aging 877-424-4649



Review



- Where can you advertise for applicants?
- What are some ways to interview and select applicants?
- What are the steps to teach new tasks?
- What are some methods to resolve conflict?
- How can theft be avoided?
- How should you fire a person, if necessary?
- What are some funding options?

Review with Answers

- **Know where to advertise for applicants** - Colleges, Job Service, CILs, Senior Centers, Libraries, Malls, Grocery Stores, etc.
- **Learn how to interview and select personal assistants** – Screen over the phone. Ask lots of questions. Hire person with good references and communication skills, experience, positive attitude, good reason for applying, clean and trustworthy appearance, and respect.
- **Identify the steps needed to teach new tasks** - Introduce, explain, demonstrate, repeat, imitate, refine, and give feedback – praise or gently correct any mistakes.
- **Learn how to resolve conflict** - Face each issue as it comes. Be relaxed. Clearly explain. Listen to your PA. Work together. Try for a win-win solution.
- **Understand how to avoid theft** – Be alert. Put away money. Control cash. Don't give out credit card. Don't use personal car.
- **Understand how to fire** - Provide valid reasons. Use good eye contact and firm voice. Practice what to say. Ask for keys back. Fire at end of shift.
- **Learn what possible funding options are available** – Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Insurance, Area Agency on Aging, DSPD.

Take a Break



Take a Break (cont.)

When I am feeling stressed, I can:

- Take a break
- Listen to music I enjoy
- Develop a consistent sleep routine
- Take a nap
- Spend time with others
- Set realistic goals for myself
- Give myself permission to NOT be super-human





Things to Remember

- Remember to take good care of yourself by staying positive, exercising regularly, getting enough rest, eating nutritiously, using good body mechanics, keeping a sense of humor, relaxing and doing some things you enjoy when you can.
- Always believe in yourself and your abilities.
- Remember that you have the strength, courage, compassion, and wisdom to succeed.
- Thanks for your participation.

